

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7239

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 3421

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: LAUGERUD/VS STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

1. PRESIDENT LAUGERUD DEVOTED A GREAT DEAL OF HIS JULY 1 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS TO DEFENDING HIS ADMINISTRATION AGAINST CHARGES OF "COMMUNISM."

2. HE ADMITTED THAT HIS RURAL POLICIES HAD "AROUSED SOME HONEST DISQUIET AMONG CERTAIN /PERSONS IN THE/ PRIVATE SECTORS," BUT CHARGED THAT THERE HAD ALSO BEEN "TREACHEROUS ZTECULATIONS BY POLITICIANS WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED PERVERSE AND IN BAD FAITH." LABEL OF "COMMUNISM" HAD BEEN APPLIED BY A CERTAIN TYPE OF POLITICIAN WHO "EXTNDS HIS HAND TO THE POOR TO ASK FOR THEIR VOTE, BUT NOT TO GIVE BREAD, HEALTH, OR LITERACY TO THEIR LIVES."

3. LAUGERUD CALLED ON THE ECONOMICALLY POWERFUL TO SUPPORT HIS POLICIES, NOT ONLY FOR HUMARITARIAN REASONS, BUT BECAUSE THEIR "SURVIVAL IS BASED ON A NATIONAL COMMUNITY OF SATISFIED MAJORITIES. I TELL THEM THAT THE BREACH WHICH SEPARATES AND CONFRONTS THOSE WHO HAVE EVERYTHING AND THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING IS STILL TOO LARGE." HE CONCLUDED BY WARNING THAT "OUR INSTITUTIONS ARE MENACED AND WE MUST ACT WITHOUT ANY DELAY SO THAT THE TWO GUATEMALAS WHICH OCUPY OUR LAND WILL CEASE TO

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EXIST."

∴ COMMENT: WE INTERPRET LAUGERUD'S REMARKS AS A WARNING TO VICE PRESIDENT SANDOVAL AND HIS MLN PARTY NOT TO TRY TO TAKE THE ADMINISTRATION'S VERY MODERATE RURAL POLICIES TO INCITE PRIVATE SECTOR OPPOSITION TO HIS GOVERNMENT. (PRACTICALLY EVERY SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE SECTOR LEADER IS ALSO A LANDOWNER.) SANDOVAL AND OTHER MLN SPOKESMEN HAD CHARGED JUNE 6 THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DCG) REPRESENTED THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN GUATEMALA AND THAT TO LET THEM CONTROL ANY COMMITTEES IN CONGRESS WOULD BE "EXTREMELY DANGEROUS FOR THE ECONOMY OF THE COUNTRY." LAUGERUD SUBSEQUENTLY APPROVED A CONGRESSIONAL SLATE WHICH GAVE THE DCG THREE COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS.

5. NEVERTHELESS, THE AMOUNT OF TIME LAUGERUD SPENT DEFENDING HIS ADMINISTRATION FROM CHARGES OF "COMMUNISM" INDICATES LAUGERUD'S DEEP SENSITIVITY TO THAT TYPE OF CRITICISM AND THE POWER A CHARGE OF "COMMUNISM" CONTINUES TO HAVE IN GUATEMALA. END COMMENT.
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